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C O N F I D E N T I A L ALGIERS 002116

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 10/16/2015

TAGS: [PTER](#) [KISL](#) [IZ](#) [AG](#)

SUBJECT: DISCUSSING ZAWAHIRI-ZARQAWI LETTER WITH HIGH ISLAMIC COUNCIL

REF: STATE 188931

Classified By: Charge d'Affaires Marc Sievers, Reason 1.4 (b) (d)

1. (C) Charge took advantage of an October 15 meeting on other issues with the President of the High Islamic Council, Cheikh Bouamrane, to provide him a copy of the Arabic text, downloaded from the DNI website, of Ayman al-Zawahiri's letter to Abu Musab al-Zarqawi. Charge stressed that the letter provided documentary evidence of Al-Qaida's plans to turn Iraq into a base for overthrowing moderate regimes in the region and establishing a "Caliphate" based on their perverted interpretation of Islam. Charge added that Zawahiri's comments about how to adjust terrorist tactics in Iraq in order to win over Islamic public opinion made it all the more urgent for moderate Islamic leaders to oppose publicly Al-Qaida's twisted interpretation of their religion.

2. (C) Bouamrane, who is known for his opposition to the Coalition intervention and presence in Iraq, thanked Charge for the Zawahiri letter, noting that he had heard about it from the Arabic media but was interested in reading the original message himself. While not accepting Charge's analysis in advance of reading the letter, Bouamrane said that if Zawahiri's advocacy of terrorism and political ambitions were as Charge described, the High Islamic Council would condemn them publicly. He stressed, however, his view that discussions of the correct interpretation of the concept of jihad and Islamic principles should be conducted "among Muslims."
SIEVERS